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# THE FRENCH COURSE OF STUDY

## FOURTH YEAR FRENCH<sup>1</sup>

### *Aims and Attainments*

At the end of French IV, which is the equivalent of a junior college course, the pupil understands spoken French, writes that language with a fair degree of correctness and translates at sight, with few errors, such English as is found in Jaques' "*Intermediate French*." In literature, he has studied in some detail (see below) the Romantic group, and has gained a general idea of the movement of French literature from early times to the present. This work has been done by the so-called laboratory method, which means that the pupil has worked on the material himself, has had much practice in the discussion of such questions as could arise out of the course, and in the writing of reports on books read. He is ready for such courses as are described under numbers 7, 8, 9, 16 of the Department of French of Harvard University, courses on special periods of literature and for advanced language work.

### *Subject Matter and Methods*

The class work is conducted in the same way as in French III and the course of literature, around which the oral and written work centers, is given informally and practically, with the technical summing up at the end.

Oral work continues, with progress along the several lines described in the third year course. There is special emphasis, at the beginning of the course, on pronunciation and practice in reading. The matter for reading is from class texts or from books referred to, and the standard for the pupil is to read with correctness, with a certain rapidity, and in such a manner that he can be understood by the others. To speak as well as the teacher is what the pupil is to work for in the fourth year. He does not reach that standard, of course, but he does better by trying to

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<sup>1</sup>Written by members of the French Department of the University High School and Elementary Schools, University of Chicago, Arthur G. Bovée, Head of Department, Frances R. Angus, Josette E. Spink, Ethel Preston, Katharine Slaught.

than he otherwise would. The stories and other matter read to the class for reproduction, dictation, or notes, are chosen from the authors of the course of literature. The topics for class conversation are more numerous, and are carried further as the vocabulary and interests of the class dictate. The pupil is encouraged to express his own opinion, the teacher gives his, and the question is argued out, the pupil being urged to think for himself and not to accept the conclusions of others unless he sees the force of the reasoning. From these informal conversations, as in French III, the teacher gains an insight into the pupil's mind, is able to direct his work to the best advantage, to give him special exercises for his particular failings, to suggest work that will correlate with his English literature or other studies for the "long" papers or essays. It is in these talks that the future work is discussed, the various possibilities shown, and the desirability made evident of getting a mastery of a subject to which one has already given so much time.

The translation book, Jaques' "*Intermediate French*," is used for sight translation in class (usually written on the board, as explained in Third Year French); then the French model in the first part of the book is read and the work is gone over at home. There is further practice in the various types of translation as described under French III. For rapid sight translation from English into French, sections from the Introduction to "*Hernani*," etc., are used.

Letters are written from time to time and a few long papers during the year. The long book-analysis is on a novel of Hugo or Balzac; another long paper is based on some aspect of the Romantic School that interests the individual pupil and upon which he wishes to put some extra work (e.g., *Le drame romantique*, *la tragédie et la comédie*, *les poètes romantiques*, etc.); another paper represents the pupil's special interest (e.g., *L'aveuglement et la mort dans quelques-unes des pièces de Maeterlinck et Synge*; *Trois Avarès-Harpagon*, *Grandet*, *Silas Marner*; *La pièce "bien-faite"*, etc.). The pupils realize perfectly that they are only clearing the way for more advanced work, that these papers are a very elementary treatment of the subject, that what they are doing is thorough as far as it goes, but that it moves within the defined limits of the course.

What is said of the examination in the third year applies here. It is made a part of the course, not given merely to fix the standing of the pupil. Every book read at home is discussed in class and is written up by the pupil. One or more poems of each author are learned by heart.

Grammar study has been completed in the third year, but there are constant reviews and applications of rules. Note-books are used as in third year. About the same amount of home work is given as in the previous year, but the pupil has more liberty with regard to the time of his home reading. The work on class texts must, of course, be prepared day by day.

It is to be understood that the training of the pupils to understand, to speak, and to write French receives always the major part of the attention and that the course of literature as worked out here contributes to that end. Varied matter, richer matter, is constantly needed to enrich the pupil's language and ideas, and it is found in the books read and discussed. The books chosen must interest him, must be within his power of comprehension, if he is to draw full benefit from them as regards both language and ideas. To work intelligently he must also realize that what he is doing is part of a whole and that he must attach his present work to a wider field.

The teacher talks over with the class, the first day, the possibilities of fourth year work and reasons are discussed for choosing the first half of the nineteenth century for somewhat detailed study with a general survey course, which will be worked in gradually, as the need is felt. The general background is necessary for the understanding of a particular period, so that the pupil will not consider it as suspended in the air. It also orients him in choosing his college work, for he has had a taste of different periods, sees their relation to one another, and realizes that they form one whole.

The course is begun by reading in class<sup>3</sup> "*le Merle blanc*," where de Musset's later attitude toward the Romantic movement is shown, and where some characteristics of the Romantic school are described in satirical vein. It amuses the pupil, and obliges him to review or acquire some ideas on the history of that time.

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<sup>3</sup>Class text means detailed study for language and ideas, and as literature (French III).

There is gathered up what the pupil has already learned of the Romanticists, of the Revolution, of the causes leading to it, its results, and its effect on literature. He is then ready to go back to the precursors, to Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël, to discuss their works, to read extracts from them (at home and in class), to talk of their lives and influence, and then to read over in class (to be studied afterwards at home) what is in the textbook, "*Histoire de la littérature française*" par Abry, Audic et Crouzet.

Of Chateaubriand, "*René*" and "*Atala*" are read at home; and extracts from "*Mémoires d'outre-tombe*," "*le Génie du christianisme*," are read either in class or at home. The extracts from Mme de Staël (fewer in number) are from "*Corinne*," "*de l'Allemagne*," "*de la Littérature*." The reading of de Musset is then continued. "*Trois Comédies*" is read in detail, some of his poetry<sup>4</sup> is gradually worked in, and talks on his life, role, works. Then the class reads and studies what is in the History of Literature, making the omissions or additions desired. Extracts from "*Lettres de Dupuis et Cotonet*," selections from Sainte-Beuve and other critics<sup>5</sup> on de Musset, are read to the class. "*Pierre et Camille*" is read at home. Along with this work Romanticism is traced back through its immediate precursors to Rousseau and his disciple Saint-Pierre, and some general idea of the eighteenth century is given; then later, in connection with Hugo and versification (Bowen's "*Lyrics*," Canfield's "*Lyrics*," Introduction of Schinz's Verse of Hugo and Preface of "*Hernani*"), there is discussion of the classics of the seventeenth century and of the free verse to be found in Racine and in Lafontaine, then of the sixteenth century with Ronsard.

Of Hugo, "*Hernani*" and from twenty to thirty of the poems are read in class. There is a discussion of his life, his personality, his works, then the History of Literature is studied. One of his novels mentioned below is read at home. For most of the pupils this is the third novel of Hugo. On this one they write a long paper—a critical analysis. In the meantime Lamartine's poetry has been taken up—"le Lac" and five or six other poems—with a

<sup>4</sup>See what is said on teaching poetry in third year. M. L. J., p. 315.

<sup>5</sup>Other critics cited or consulted by the class during the year are: Faguet, Brunetière, Lanson, Doumic, Pellissier.

consideration of his work as a whole and what he stands for in the Romantic movement. Extracts from the Preface of his works and from his works themselves are read in class and at home. "*Graziella*" or "*Jeanne d'Arc*" is also read at home. While working along with the poets of the Romantic school, the class reads at sight (studying afterwards at home) "*le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*" in connection with the general course, for variety in class work, and for the real interest and value of this comedy. Along with the study of Balzac and Gautier there is a forward look into the development of literature in the second half of the nineteenth century with its Realists, Parnassians, Symbolists, and Modernists. The general course is completed (save for what will be done with "*Cyrano de Bergerac*") by the extracts read during the course of the year from "*Chanson de Roland*" (Fabre), etc., of the earlier centuries. (See list below). The old French (in "*Chrestomathie du Moyen-Age*") is shown to the pupils, so that they may realize the changes the language has undergone and look forward to the study of old French after they have acquired a good knowledge of the modern language and literature.

In the last months "*Cyrano de Bergerac*" is taken in class as a manifestation of the later romantic movement and as one of the most interesting and beautiful plays of the world. The French being very difficult, it is read first in class, then each section studied at home. *En passant*, the various subjects necessary for the understanding of the text are taken up (les Précieuses, les salons, the real Cyrano de Bergerac, his life, his works), showing the pupil the reality of the revival of this romantic part of the seventeenth century. In this connection "*les Femmes savantes*," "*les Précieuses ridicules*," and "*les Fourberies de Scapin*" are read partly in class and finished at home.

In the informal class discussions, as noted before, the teacher calls the attention of the pupil to the various channels of future study. Every opportunity is taken to attach his work to what has preceded and followed. For instance, when working on "*Hernani*," the drama of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries is spoken of. Outside the class a play of each of the three great classicists is read; in class the play of Marivaux, and outside, "*le Barbier de Séville*," as the first specimen of the "well-made" play, since carried to such excess in France. Plays

from Scribe, Labiche, Brieux (see reading list of third year) are read or have already been read, and so the pupil learns to distinguish the play where technique is the only ideal, the play in which there is the combination of technique and theme, and finally the play in which theme predominates.

The following table shows the work done on the subjects of Romanticism, Revival of Romanticism, and General View of French Literature. The "*Histoire de la littérature*" is studied<sup>6</sup> with regard to the authors of the first group and consulted from time to time with regard to the second.

| <i>Romanticism</i> |  |   |   |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Author             | Detailed Study   | Selections read   |   |
|                    |  | in Class  | Home Reading  |
| de Staël           |  | Extracts from:<br>Corinne, de<br>l'Allemagne, de<br>la Littérature  |   |
| Chateaubriand      |  | Extracts from:<br>les Martyrs, le<br>Génie du christianisme, Mé-<br>moires d'outre<br>tombe.                  | Atala and René  |
| de Musset          | le Merle blanc, Trois Comédies, les Nuits, and six to ten other poems. | Extracts from<br>Lettres de Dupuis et<br>Cotonet.<br>Extracts from<br>Sainte-Beuve's<br>Essay on de<br>Musset | Pierre et Camille or<br>Croisilles, and<br>Il ne faut jurer<br>de rien. |

<sup>6</sup>See Method, p. 000.

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|-----------|---|--|
| Lamartine | le Lac and six<br>to ten other<br>poems                   | Extracts from Graziella<br>Jocelyn, les<br>Confidences, et Jeanne d'Arc<br>Préface de ses<br>oeuvres.  |
| Hugo      | Hernani,<br>Twenty to<br>thirty of the<br>principal poems | One of the fol-<br>lowing: Notre-<br>Dame, les Tra-<br>vailleurs de la<br>Mer, Quatre-<br>vingt-treize, les<br>Misérables<br>(American edi-<br>tion) |
| de Vigny  | Moïse, le<br>Loup, Samson                                 | A few other<br>poems; Episodes<br>de Servitude et<br>Grandeur Mili-<br>taires, Chatter-<br>ton.  |
| Gautier   | Poems in<br>Canfield's<br>Lyrics                          | Jettatura or le<br>Roman de la<br>Momie  |
| Dumas     |   | Henri III et Sa<br>Cour, Comment<br>je devins auteur<br>dramatique.  |
| Sand      |   | la Mare au<br>Diable, or Fa-<br>dette  |
| Stendahl  | Work and influence talked of; nothing read.               |  |



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| Mérimeé | A few short stories—according to what the pupils have already had. | Eight to ten short stories |
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| Balzac |  | Eugénie Grandet, Cousin Pons, or Père Goriot (American edition) |
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| Michelet |  | Extracts (Holt) |
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*Revival of Romanticism*

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|---------|--------------------|--|---|
| Rostand | Cyrano de Bergerac | Extracts from Cyrano's Entretiens pointus, le Pédant joué etc. | In connection with les Femmes Savantes, les Précieuses ridicules, les Fourberies de Scapin of Molière |
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*General View of French Literature*

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Detailed Study: le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard (Marivaux)

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|-------------------------|---|
| Class and Home Reading: | Selections from: Chanson de Roland, (Fabre) Aucassin et Nicolette, (Michaut). Lafontaine, Voltaire, Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Ossian, Byron. |
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Home Reading: Pathelin (Bruey), l'Avare or le Misanthrope, le Cid, le Barbier de Séville, some Maeterlinck, and what is noted under other headings.

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*Text Books*

The pupil has the school and University libraries to draw from. He needs for himself the dictionaries noted under French III and the class texts:

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|---|---------------------------|---|
| Histoire illustrée de la<br>littérature française | Abry, Audic et<br>Crouzet | Didier  |
| le Merle blanc                                    | de Musset                 | in Buffum's Short<br>Stories, used in<br>third year |
| Trois Comédies                                    | de Musset                 | Heath   |
| French Lyrics                                     | Canfield                  | Holt  |
| Hernani   | Hugo                      | (Matzke) Holt                                       |
| Poetry,   | Hugo                      | (Schinz) Heath                                      |
| Atala and René                                    | Chateaubriand             | Nelson  |
| Jeu de l'amour et du<br>hasard                    | Marivaux                  | Heath   |
| Cyrano de Bergerac,                               | Rostand                   | (Kuhns) Holt  |
| Fifty Fables                                      | Lafontaine                | American Book Co.                                   |
| Intermediate French                               | Jaques                    | Ginn  |

Books of reference on desk for consultation: Chrestomathie du Moyen-Age (Langlois et Thomas). Aucassin et Nicolette (G. Michaut), Bowen's Lyrics. de Musset (Kuhns) Selections of Pellisson, Premières Méditations (Lamartine), les Destinées (de Vigny). Histoires de la littérature française by Lanson, Doumic. Pellissier, Faguet.